

TRANSLATION AND VALIDATION OF THE DUTCH VERSION OF THE 'MULTIDIMENSIONAL FEAR OF DEATH SCALE'

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1. Aim:

Professional caregivers in palliative care are frequently confronted with 'dying' and 'death'. One's personal attitude towards death influences his way of professional functioning. At the same time, working in palliative care has consequences on one's personal attitude towards death and hence on his personal life. The 'Multidimensional Fear of Death Scale' (MFODS) is a well known and studied scale to measure this attitude. We want to translate this English scale into a Dutch version and validate it for use with palliative care professionals.

2. Methods:

The scale was translated into Dutch according to the Translation Manual of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC). Factor analysis was done to determine the factor structure of the scale (principal component analysis with varimax rotation). Internal consistency was calculated using the Cronbach's alpha. Stability was calculated by Pearson's correlation coefficient. Multivariate analysis was conducted in order to evaluate socio-demographic correlates. The study population was a sample of 252 general practitioners and nurses of nursing homes. All analyses were done using SPSS 17.

3. Results:

Factor analysis revealed seven distinct dimensions of fear of death. The average Cronbach's alpha was .735. Test-retest stability gave an average Pearson's coefficient of .723. Multivariate analysis showed an influence of sex and age on all dimensions and an influence of education in palliative care on one dimension (fear of dying process).

4. Conclusion:

The Dutch version of the MFODS shows good similarities with the original English version concerning factor structure and statistical analysis. The scale has proven to be useful in the target sample of professional caregivers. This scale can measure the effect of working in palliative care on personal attitudes towards death and can be helpful in the 'care for carers'. Further research is needed to explore the effects of education in palliative care on this attitude to prepare caregivers for their task.

Type:

Assessment & measurement tools